

Applicant Submission



CALGARY DREAM CENTRE

Restoring Dignity, Discovering Destiny, Realizing Dreams

December 11, 2020

Affordable Housing Need

The Affordable Housing Report led by Calgary Housing identifies a large need to increase the non-market housing supply in Calgary. Affordable Housing is a critical resource for Calgary citizens and is essential for combatting homelessness. The goal of Affordable Housing is to provide affordable, inclusive, and accessible shelter to those with little or no income.

The City of Calgary wants to upscale non-profit organizations to provide more Affordable Housing to meet the ongoing need, amplified by COVID-19. Additionally, Affordable Housing would reduce the need for emergency services saving \$34,000.00 per homeless person housed. The University Health Network's (UHN) aim is to help break the cycle of hospitals admitting and readmitting vulnerable individuals due to a lack of adequate housing and community support services. Based on our proposal of housing 145 individuals facing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness in a repurposed hotel for affordable housing, this initiative could potentially save the City of Calgary nearly \$5.0M in emergency services annually.

As mentioned prior, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified shortfalls and has created a new urgency for Canada's supply of affordable housing—especially for vulnerable populations. The Federal Government has introduced the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) as a solution. This initiative which is led by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides funding to expedite the delivery of affordable housing units to vulnerable people and populations targeted under the National Housing Strategy. CMHC will contribute up to 100% of funding to support the acquisition and conversion of a non-residential building to an affordable rental project.

The Calgary Dream Centre (CDC)

The Calgary Dream Centre is applying for the RHI funding to help ease the affordable housing shortage in Calgary. The property to be purchased is the Holiday Inn Calgary located at 4206 Macleod Trail South. This is two blocks north from our current facility at 4510 Macleod Trail SW.

The CDC has been in existence on Macleod Trail since October 2003 and its purpose is guiding people caught in the cycle of homelessness and addiction into lives of purpose. Our vision is life change for the homeless and hurting. Our mission is to help people restore their dignity, discover their destiny, and realize their dreams. Through professional mental health and

addiction recovery programming, counselling, and compassionate outreach, the CDC empowers Calgarians to overcome the struggles of homelessness and addiction. Our team works tirelessly to provide individuals with the opportunities and encouragement they need to start their journey.

Since the inception of our 4510 Macleod Trail location, the CDC has expanded to provide community housing to men and women over 18 years of age across the city of Calgary. Alongside offering community housing we also operate a women's recovery program and a low-cost housing program. The CDC has 49 locations across Calgary, including single detached homes, duplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings. We also operate and manage another apartment for HomeSpace Calgary, which is also primarily affordable housing.

The Dream Centre takes great pride in our property management team, ensuring all properties are well maintained, both inside and outside. We have a good rapport with all neighbors and believe in teaching our clients the value of giving back in their communities. We seldom have encountered complaints about our properties, but should a situation arise we do our due diligence to resolve the matter with respect to the neighbor and/or neighborhood. We will strive to ensure the same relationship with the communities at the new property at 4206 Macleod Trail S. Notably, Macleod Trail serves as a buffer between the proposed property and the residential areas.

The proximity of the Hotel to our main facility will allow for sharing of resources and staff. This collaborative relationship will aid in our goal to lower the rental costs for residents below market-rent. The CDC will operate the facility as affordable housing without requiring financial assistance from the government. With seventeen years of industry experience, as well as our capable staff, we are confident in our ability to successfully operate the repurposed Hotel.

Our ultimate goal is to provide affordable housing to those who need it the most. We believe that we are offering not only a safe and affordable place, but a place to call home. Our history proves that treating our residents with dignity and offering them hope, is the catalyst for achieving a life of purpose and integrating back into society.

Project Description

This project is to provide affordable housing and long-term housing for 145 individuals over the age of 18 who are living in homelessness or at risk of entering homelessness. This housing would welcome all demographics including the Indigenous and Black Canadian populations alongside other men and women of all races, gender identities and ethnicities. This also includes accommodating those with disabilities. The CDC has a well-established intake process that will be used for selecting the residents. This process has been successfully used at the main facility and will ensure the right resident's will be selected to alleviate any concerns of the surrounding communities.

The Hotel is to be renovated and repurposed for affordable residential housing. In summary, it is a four story building constructed in 1975 and is in impeccable shape. It is situated on 2.8 acres of land. The hotel has 150 guest rooms (of which 145 are suitable for affordable housing), and parking for 180 vehicles. There is an elevator to access all four floors and public restrooms are accessible equipped. The facility also includes a restaurant, lounge, pool, fitness center, and meeting rooms.

The hotel is also strategically located adjacent to the 39 Avenue LRT station and Macleod Trail. City buses also are available in front of the hotel for easy access to downtown and shopping areas such as the Chinook Centre. This is a perfect location for the affordable housing due to its distance to the downtown core, its close proximity to our main facility, and easy access to transportation and amenities.

Once the hotel is repurposed to affordable housing, provided services will include full-time security, as well as maintenance, cleaning, administration, restaurant, and thrift store staff. The goal is to train and employ residents who are looking for employment opportunities and experience.

The repurposed hotel will have an on-site restaurant for residents and public use, a Thrift Shop for residents and public use. These are commercial ventures for developing operating income for the facility. There will also be laundry facilities on each residential floor and a fitness center for exclusive use by residents. Meeting rooms will be made available to the residents. The residents' rooms will be fully furnished. There are plans to build a storage facility in the NE corner of the property for facility storage and Social Enterprise purposes (i.e. Thrift shop drop-off and sorting). There will be a disposal and recyclables shed located next to the storage facility to service the facility and residents.

Proposed Renovations

The renovations require changing the hotel front desk into a Security Office, the Administration Office will be remodeled and will contain three offices for Managers and an open area with cubicles for Admin staff.

The Restaurant will have minimal changes with pony walls removed to make for more flexible position of tables, with changes made to the bar area.

The Kitchen will have upgraded equipment to replace non-functioning equipment. This new equipment will be more energy efficient. Minor changes are proposed for the servers' work area.

The Existing pool will be shut down and a subfloor will be placed over the pool and deck to create the space for a Thrift shop. A new set of front doors will be added to the street side of the thrift shop for public entrance. Residents can use the existing pool room entrance for access to the thrift shop from inside the facility.

New equipment will be added to the Mechanical room for boiler purposes and the old equipment currently out of service will be removed. If funding is available, we propose to add a standby generator for times when city power is unavailable.

Guest rooms will have built-in heating/air conditioning units under the windows replacing the old HVACs on the roof which do not function properly below -10 degrees Celsius. The rooms will also have the old carpet removed and vinyl planking installed. A larger bathroom sink, counter and hardware will be added to provide room for food preparation. Each room will have a coffee/tea maker, mini-refrigerator, microwave, and an induction hot plate provided.

The security system, door locks, and smoke detectors will be upgraded where necessary. The current business center and server room will be combined into one room for housing computer and security equipment.

There are plans to add a 3000 SF footprint shed in the back NE corner of the parking lot for storage and for Thrift shop drop-off and sorting. This will need full services added. Next to the storage shed will be the disposal and recycling shed that will be relocated from the current locations on the east side of the building near the restaurant and mechanical room.

All of these renovations are to provide cost effective services to the residents while using the social enterprise commercial areas for revenue to offset operational costs and to help keep residents' rental rates below market-rates. The social enterprise ventures will also provide training and jobs for some residents of the facility.

Conclusion

The need for affordable housing in Calgary, the timing of the RHI application process, and the will of the Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Governments to act on supplying affordable housing makes this the perfect time for the Calgary Dream Centre to expand our expertise to service more of the vulnerable population in Calgary. We have an ideal location and a proven track record that we can deliver.

Thank you!